



***"Only he who can say, 'The Lord is the strength of my life' can say, 'Of whom shall I be afraid?'"***

~ Alexander MacLaren

### **VIETNAM: Christians Face Opposition and Violence**

Source: Voice of the Martyrs Australia Contacts

Christian workers in Vietnam are requesting urgent prayer on behalf of believers who have recently experienced situations of severe persecution. In response to the ongoing concern, VOMC's partnering ministry office in Australia has been providing the affected Christians with greatly needed financial assistance.

In one village, a group of believers were forced to leave their homes due to the pressures they encountered in the community. Even though these displaced followers of Jesus have thankfully been able to find temporary accommodations with fellow believers, they presently remain without permanent residences of their own. Another Christian known as Mr. Bah was also forced to leave his house after refusing to renounce his faith. He is temporarily staying in the kitchen of his pastor's home.



A village in Vietnam.

Pastor Dan is an elderly Christian leader who uses his home for church gatherings. On December 23rd, when a group of believers had gathered at the pastor's residence for worship, local authorities – accompanied by other hostile community members described as "thugs" – broke into the pastor's home. The convening church members were physically attacked during the invasion. When Pastor Dan attempted to intervene, the authorities proceeded to severely beat him, consequently breaking his arm and leg.

Brother Ting and his family members regularly held church gatherings in their home as well. When local authorities requested that these believers stop meeting for worship, Ting refused. Soon after, the Christian leader was found beaten to death along the side of a road. In addition, the authorities had ordered Ting's wife, Mar, to do community work. After explaining that she was too busy and unable to help, Pastor Ting's wife was found dead in her home about a week after Ting was murdered.

Christians in Vietnam, particularly those who live within tribal areas, frequently face opposition from local authorities. To learn more about the suffering of our Vietnamese family in Christ, visit VOMC's [country profile](#).

- ***Prayerfully uphold each one of the Vietnamese believers who have been personally affected by these recently occurring acts of opposition.***
- ***For those who were forced to leave their homes, pray for God's intervention, provision and protection to take place in their lives.***
- ***Ask the Lord to also provide necessary physical and emotional healing to all who sustained injuries as a result of the devastating attacks.***
- ***On behalf of the grieving family and friends of Brother Ting and his wife Mar, pray that they will tangibly sense God's unfailing love, comfort, as well as His "peace that surpasses all understanding" (Philippians 4:7).***
- ***In general, pray that all believers in Vietnam will continue to entrust their lives to the One who holds the future in His hands.***

## COLOMBIA: Pastoring Family Assassinated

Sources: El Tiempo, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, VOMC Contact, Defensoría del Pueblo

Police are currently investigating the drive-by assassination of Pastor Marlon Lora and his family, which took place on December 29th. Pastor Marlon, his wife Yurlay Rincon – along with their two children, Angela and Santiago – had been finishing lunch when they were suddenly gunned down by men on a motorcycle. The violent attack occurred just metres away from the police station in Aguachica, northern Colombia.

In addition to providing leadership to 36 churches across the region, Pastor Marlon personally pastored the Prince of Peace Villaparraguay Church in Aguachica. According to the couple's supervisor, Pastor Giovanni Bermúdez, "Marlon was like many of us pastors; we keep quiet about many things so that everything runs smoothly, even while we carry heavy burdens inside."

The motive behind the attack is not yet clear. However, there has been speculation that one of the perpetrators may have previously attended a service at Pastor Marlon's church. Authorities are investigating whether there may have been extortion threats in an attempt to obtain offering money that was collected by the church.

The office of the ombudsman in Colombia has warned that incidents violating religious freedom increased by 31 percent within the first nine months of 2024. In particular, the report noted a concerning increase in cases involving death threats against religious leaders. For further information on Christian persecution in Colombia, and/or to view informative video interviews, visit our [country report](#).

- ***May the comfort of the Holy Spirit rest on all those who are now mourning the heartbreaking loss of this dear family of believers.***
- ***Pray that God will mightily protect Colombia's church leaders and their families from those opposed to the Gospel message.***
- ***In fact, ask the Lord to strengthen and encourage all believers throughout Colombia, empowering them to stand firm in the face of opposition and faithfully serve as testimonies of God's love and grace to those around them.***



Pastor Marlon Lora and his family.  
Photo: The Lora family

## PAKISTAN: Three Christians Shot on Christmas Day

Sources: Morning Star News, The Friday Times

Three Christians were injured in a violent attack on Christmas Day outside the home of a pastor in Lahore. The incident happened just one day after a confrontation between Pastor Shahzad Siddique and a group of militant Muslim youth who had been harassing guests at a church event. Speaking of the incident, Pastor Shahzad stated, "I had returned home from church on Christmas Day and was resting when gunmen opened fire on a gathering outside my house in Maryam Colony."

Witnesses attest that though more than a dozen gunmen were involved in the initial attack, no one was wounded at that time. However, after police arrived at the scene 25 minutes later and began investigating the initial incident, several youths on motorcycles suddenly appeared and opened fire. During this second attack, three people were injured – including Akash Patras, a believer who suffered a serious abdominal wound.



Arif Masih, one of three men wounded in the attack.  
Photo: Christian Daily International-Morning Star News

Although one suspect was caught immediately, the others fled on foot, leaving five abandoned motorcycles behind. Since the shooting, at least four other perpetrators have been arrested. While police officials continue their investigations, additional security measures have been deployed in the area.

Violence against Christians in Pakistan, which is often instigated by false accusations against them, appears to have escalated over recent years. More information, as well as previously published reports of concern, may be viewed at our [country profile](#).

- ***Pray that the Lord will minister His healing touch upon all the injured church members, including Akash who is recovering from the severe abdominal wound.***
- ***Also prayerfully uphold Pakistan's governing authorities as they work to bring about justice on behalf of this targeted group of believers.***
- ***May Pastor Shahzad and the members of his church be filled with courage, peace and greater determination as they seek to serve God despite the opposition they encounter.***

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The "Persecution & Prayer Alert" is a ministry of:  
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